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for residents of knowle and dorridge

march 2024



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Welcome to the March edition

It's a great time of year to start thinking about your next house move, or having a Spring clean, or maybe getting around to those home and garden improvements you've been putting off and off...

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'Top of the Pops' - Tribute to the Decades 60s - 00s

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9 April, Resorts World Arena

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time Academy Award® winner Hans Zimmer. The audience will be taken on a unique musical journey that will immerse them in completely new dimensions. Hans Zimmer himself will not appear live on stage in The World of Hans Zimmer - A New Dimension but will function as the show's curator and musical director. Tickets from <https://www.resortsworldarena.co.uk>

Menopause Café

28 April 10am, Two

Mugs café, Shirley

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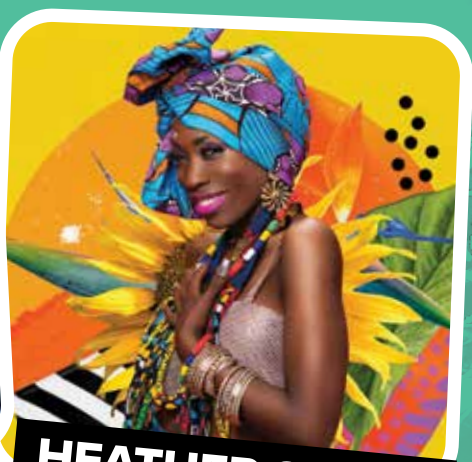
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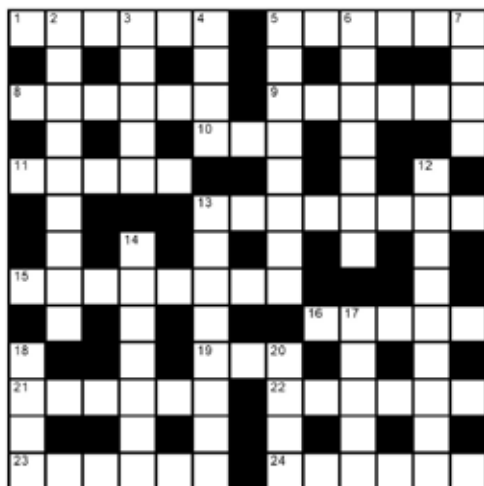


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crossword



clues

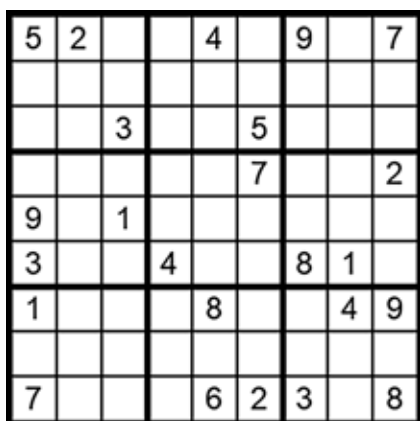
Across

- 1 Boundary trim (6)
- 5 Pour out (6)
- 8 Bitter-leaved salad vegetable (6)
- 9 Rod (6)
- 10 Historical time period (3)
- 11 Mild, pleasant weather (5)
- 13 Colourless, flammable, oily liquid (8)
- 15 Languish, idle (8)
- 16 Hit hard with hand (5)
- 19 Neither liquid nor solid (3)
- 21 Bring back to life (6)
- 22 Boiler, furnace (6)
- 23 Avenue, boulevard (6)
- 24 Caged, imprisoned (6)

Down

- 2 Bibbed trousers (9)
- 3 Turn of phrase (5)
- 4 Delight (4)
- 5 Clash, contradict (8)
- 6 Explain (7)
- 7 Assignment (4)
- 12 Watch or clock (9)
- 13 Loud resonant and mournful (8)
- 14 Cold-blooded vertebrate (7)
- 17 Acquire information (5)
- 18 Weaponry (4)
- 20 Send, transport (4)

answer on page 34



how to play sudoku

It's simple!

Fill in the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box, contains the numbers 1 through to 9 with no repetition. You don't need to be a genius. These puzzles use logic alone. Watch out! Sudoku is highly addictive.

answer on page 34

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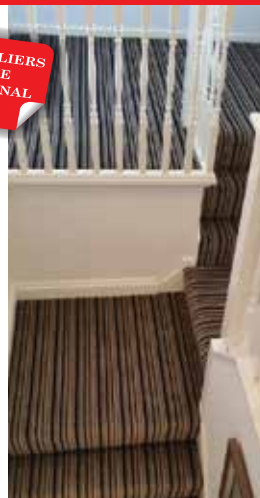
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Why you need a divorce financial order to cut all ties with your ex

The landmark case of Wyatt v Vince, where the multimillionaire windfarm tycoon's ex-wife made a successful financial claim 20 years after the divorce, should act as a cautionary tale for anyone thinking of a DIY divorce, Dipika Mistry, Legal Director at Solihull-based law firm, Shakespeare Martineau, explains...

A Divorce Final Order Is Not Enough

A lot of couples who undertake DIY divorces fall into the trap of thinking that the divorce date – or final order – is the end. A divorce final order is NOT a clean break financial order. In reality, without proper protection, financial claims can be made many years later.

Consent Orders

A Consent Order is a document that records the financial agreement on divorce. Essentially, it records how couples have decided to split their financial assets and is usually prepared by a solicitor and signed off by the court.

Obtaining an Order

If the terms of a financial settlement cannot easily be agreed, then divorcing couples have a range of options to resolve matters, for example, mediation, collaborative family law meetings, solicitor led round table meetings, arbitration or setting up private hearings with a Judge outside of the formal court route. Financial disclosure should be a part of all these options. The aim is to reach agreement and have a Consent Order drawn up. If no agreement can be reached, it is open to either party to issue a financial application at court. Whatever decision the Judge at court makes in terms of how assets are to be divided, is set out in a binding Court Order.

How long does it take?

The length of the process depends on how quickly an agreement can be reached. If both parties are in agreement, it can be relatively quick. Instigating court proceedings will obviously cause delay and can mean a much lengthier process with more legal costs.

What are the costs

The cost of having a solicitor draft a Consent Order very much depends on the complexity of the case. If significant levels of financial disclosure and specific legal advice is required, this will see the cost rise. While anyone can technically draft a Consent Order, it is highly recommended that it is done by a solicitor or barrister, to ensure it is legally sound.



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a good read

By Natasha Donovan

Bitter

by Francesca Jakobi

Bitter is Francesca Jakobi's astonishing first novel. It is a captivating exploration of complex family dynamics, narrated with a poignant blend of humour and melancholy. The novel unfolds through the eyes of Gilda, a twice-divorced, middle-aged woman grappling with the recent marriage of her only child, Reuben. While Gilda is depicted as an overbearing Jewish mother, the portrayal is never clichéd, but rather deeply nuanced, blending past and present to create a relatable and poignant character.

Jakobi's short chapters drives the narrative forward at a compelling pace. The book's heart lies in its exploration of Gilda's troubled relationship with her son and her escalating jealousy towards his new wife. This personal drama is skilfully balanced with moments of dry humour, often through Gilda's humorous reflections, a testament to Jakobi's ability to weave lightness into the fabric of a fundamentally sombre story.

The novel's title, 'Bitter,' is a play on the German word for 'please.' The novel delves into Gilda's backstory, as a displaced and isolated German girl attending an English boarding school during the 1930s.

While *Bitter* flirts with the conventions of a psychological thriller, with Gilda's near-obsessive behaviour towards her daughter-in-law, creating moments of intense suspense, at its core is a story of love, kindness, and lasting friendship. Jakobi unsettles us at the same time as making us laugh out loud at Gilda's exploits, but her real skill is in making us somehow love this out-of-control Jewish mother and in doing so, encouraging against our better judgment to side with Gilda!

A thoroughly engaging read.

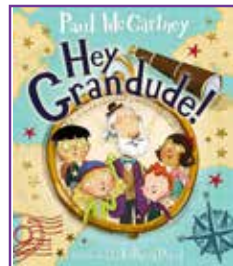


Hey Grandude!

by Paul McCartney
and illustrated by
Kathryn Durst.

This is a delightful and imaginative children's book by singer songwriter Paul McCartney, which takes young readers on an enchanting adventure alongside a charming and unconventional grandfather, presumably not unlike Mr. McCartney himself! The book's title is a playful nod to McCartney's Beatles fame, and sets the tone for a whimsical tale. Grandude, is a cool, intrepid explorer with a magical compass, inviting his four grandchildren – or "Chillers" as he affectionately calls them – on extraordinary journeys. The narrative is simple and ideal for young children, making for a fun bedtime story. McCartney's storytelling is full of joy and wonder, making it evident that it's penned by a grandfather who enjoyed entertaining his own grandchildren.

Kathryn Durst's vibrant and detailed artwork brings the story to life adding layers of visual delight and energy to capture the excitement and magic of Grandude's adventures, from stormy seas to sandy deserts. The synergy between McCartney's charming narrative and Durst's lively illustrations makes for an engaging read. Grandude is a story that celebrates the beautiful bond between grandparents and grandchildren, encouraging both generations to embark on adventures and explore the wonders the world has to offer.



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Saints Days – Why do we have them?

This month we have St David's Day and St Patrick's Day, but why do we have saints' days, and do they have any relevance today?

The tradition of saints' days can be traced back to the early Christian Church. Initially, these days were primarily commemorations of martyrs who had died for their faith during periods of persecution. Over time, as Christianity spread and evolved, the Church began to recognize and honour other individuals who led exemplary lives of faith, charity, and piety. These individuals were canonized as saints, and

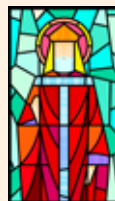
specific days were set aside to celebrate their contributions to the faith and community.

The early observance of saints' days was more than a religious practice; it also served to strengthen communities and reinforce moral values. By celebrating the lives of saints, people were reminded of virtuous ideals and inspired to emulate these holy figures.

Despite the passage of centuries, saint's days continue to be observed for several reasons. In addition to religious significance, saint's days are often intertwined with cultural and national identity. For

instance, St. Patrick's Day in Ireland or St. David's Day in Wales are as much about celebrating national heritage as they are about honouring a patron saint.

Moreover, many saints' days have evolved to include various customs and festivities, making them appealing even to those who may not be religious. These celebrations often involve traditional foods, music, parades, and other cultural expressions, which help to preserve and promote cultural heritage.



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It has been another year to remember with so much happening locally and nationally. This year we saw the nation celebrate the coronation of King Charles III. The joyous event brought communities together on a momentous day to welcome a new chapter of the British monarchy. It was also a year to remember for sports with the England women's football team making it all the way to the World Cup Final. Locally we have seen a host of wonderful local community events from fun runs to fireworks displays. I've enjoyed attending all of these events and look forward to another amazing year of community spirit.


This festive season I am particularly excited to visit our local shops and support the wonderful businesses in our community. From a wide range of shops to restaurants and cafes, our constituency is home to many exciting businesses, and I encourage everyone to show them support by shopping locally. On the topic of local talent thank you to all the local primary schools that have participated in my Christmas card competition! Picking a winner is always one of the hardest tasks I have to undertake with so many amazing entries and I am always blown away by the talent on display in our community.

Particularly at this time of the year, I am sure that you will join me in saying a prayer for those less fortunate than us and praying for peace around the world. As ever, my office remains open and we are conducting surgery appointments, so do not hesitate to book a slot. My contact details can be found below.

Finally, I would like to take this chance to say, from my family to yours, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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Fertiliser

This month the days get longer, and the sun gets stronger...we hope!

However,

March is famously temperamental and if the soil where you are is still wet and cold then it's wise to delay planting and sowing until the temperature rises.

Plant nutrient reserves are low at this time of year so, as the soil warms up, it's time to think about fertiliser.

Many gardeners are a bit frightened of fertiliser. All those chemical symbols on the side of the packet are rather reminiscent of school chemistry lessons. In fact, the basics are quite simple.

NPK - This can be observed on the side of most fertiliser packages. The letters stand for:

N - Nitrogen

P - Phosphorous

K - Potassium

Together these are known as the macro-nutrients and each of them has its own use.

Nitrogen primarily feeds the leafy above-the-ground parts of the plants. Phosphorous promotes strong roots. Potassium makes grass hardier, promotes germination and improves vegetable and fruit yields.

The proportions of each macro-nutrient will be printed on the packet. Equal amounts



of each nutrient make for a good general-purpose fertiliser.

A lawn will need a good balance of nitrogen and phosphorus to guarantee lush green grass with a healthy root system capable of withstanding dry spells. Fruiting plants need higher proportions of potassium.

There are other macro-nutrients: Carbon, Hydrogen and Oxygen, which plants obtain freely from the air and water; and calcium, magnesium, and sulphur, which should be present in any good general-purpose fertiliser.

Plants also need micro-nutrients: Iron, Manganese, Zinc, Boron, and Molybdenum.

Plants take all these nutrients and build everything they need from scratch, including vitamins. What plants cannot do is absorb vitamins directly from things such as pet food, milk or so-called fertilisers which contain vitamins, proteins, and fats.

So don't be intimidated by fertiliser. Decide what your plants need then read the label. It's easy as ABC...or rather NPK.

Caution!

Don't over-do it! It's best to feed little and often. Don't fertilise in direct sun or the leaves may scorch. Wait until the soil has warmed. Keep out of reach of children!

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Guinness Chocolate Puddings



Preparation time: 25 mins

Cooking time: 18 mins Add 1 hr chilling time.

Serves 4

Indulgent, slightly boozy chocolate puddings.
Perfect for St Patrick's Day on March 17th

Ingredients

150g unsalted butter, plus extra for the ramekins
200g dark chocolate (70% cocoa), roughly chopped.
90g golden caster sugar
3 large eggs
90ml Guinness
Good quality vanilla, chocolate or salted caramel ice cream to serve.

Method

Butter four 9 x 5cm ramekins. Place the butter, chocolate

and a generous pinch of salt into a heatproof bowl. Set over a small pan of barely-simmering water and stir until melted, then remove from the heat and leave to cool a little. Place the sugar and eggs into a large mixing bowl and beat with an electric whisk until pale, doubled in volume and thick enough to leave a trail. Gently fold in the melted chocolate and the Guinness. Spoon the mixture into the ramekins,

then chill in the fridge for 1 hr. In the meantime, place a baking tray on the top shelf of the oven and preheat to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Place the chilled ramekins on the hot baking tray and bake for 18 mins. Remove from the oven and leave to stand for a minute. The centres will sink a little. Pop a scoop of ice cream into the hollow and serve.

Happy St. Patrick's Day.

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Spring Equinox – March 20th

We hear the terms 'equinox' and 'solstice'

bandied about, but what do they actually mean?

These terms both relate to the Earth's orbit around the sun and its axial tilt, but they refer to different phenomena and occur at different times of the year.

Equinox: This occurs when the sun is exactly above the Equator, causing day and night to be of approximately equal length. This happens twice a year, around March 20-21 (the vernal or spring equinox) and September 22-23 (the autumnal or fall equinox). These dates

can vary slightly each year.

During an equinox, the Earth's axis is not tilted toward or away from the sun. As a result, both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres experience roughly equal amounts of daylight and darkness. Equinoxes are often associated with the transition of seasons: the vernal equinox marks the beginning of spring, and the autumnal equinox signifies the start of fall in the respective hemispheres.

Solstice: This occurs when the sun reaches its highest or lowest point in the sky at noon, marked by the longest and shortest days. It happens twice

a year, around June 20-21 (the summer solstice) and December 21-22 (the winter solstice).

During a solstice, the Earth's axis is tilted maximally toward (summer solstice) or away (winter solstice) from the sun. This results in the longest day of the year during the summer solstice and the shortest day of the year during the winter solstice in the respective hemispheres.



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A History of Easter's Delectable Delights

The association of chocolate eggs with Easter is a delightful convergence of cultural, religious, and culinary histories. Spanning centuries and continents, the story of how chocolate eggs became synonymous with Easter reveals a fascinating blend of tradition, innovation, and symbolism.

The egg has long been a symbol of new life and rebirth, a sentiment shared by many cultures and religions. In ancient times, eggs were often decorated in bright colours and given as gifts during spring festivals to celebrate the end of winter and the arrival of new life. This practice was adopted by early Christians as a symbol of Jesus Christ's resurrection, which is commemorated during Easter. The hard shell of the egg represented the sealed Tomb of Christ, and cracking the egg symbolized his resurrection from the dead.

In medieval Europe, the Christian observance of Lent, the forty days leading up to Easter, involved strict fasting rules. One such rule prohibited the consumption of eggs. However, chickens (who don't understand about Lent) continued to lay eggs during this period, leading to an excess



by the time Easter arrived. This surplus led to the tradition of boiling eggs to preserve them, which were then decorated and given as Easter gifts.

The transition from real eggs to edible confectionery eggs began in the 17th and 18th centuries. Initially, these were not made of chocolate but of sugar or marzipan. The earliest chocolate eggs were solid, and a luxury item, enjoyed primarily by the wealthy due to the high cost of chocolate at the time.

The Industrial Revolution brought significant advancements in chocolate production. The invention of the chocolate press in the 1820s by Conrad Van Houten helped in extracting cocoa butter from roasted cocoa beans. This process made chocolate more affordable and easier to mould into shapes, paving the way

for the hollow chocolate egg.

In the 19th century, companies like J.S. Fry & Sons in Britain began mass-producing chocolate eggs. John Cadbury followed suit in 1875, perfecting the art of the hollow egg and bringing it to a wider market. The Cadbury Easter egg was a game-changer, transforming the chocolate egg from a luxury to a popular treat accessible to the general public.

The history of chocolate eggs at Easter is a rich tapestry that weaves together religious tradition, culinary innovation, and cultural celebration. From ancient symbolisms of new life and rebirth to the modern-day delights of Easter egg hunts and chocolate treats, the chocolate egg has become an enduring and beloved symbol of Easter celebrations around the world, enjoyed by all ages.

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4	9	7	2	3	6	1	8	5
8	1	3	9	7	5	6	2	4
6	8	4	3	1	7	5	9	2
9	5	1	6	2	8	4	7	3
3	7	2	4	5	9	8	1	6
1	6	5	7	8	3	2	4	9
2	3	8	5	9	4	7	6	1
7	4	9	1	6	2	3	5	8

Sudoku Solution
from page 12

ED	GI	NG	DE	CA	NT			
U	D	L	I	L	A			
EN	D	I	V	E	S	H	A	F
G	O	E	R	A	R	K		
B	A	L	M	Y	G	I	T	
R	E	R	P	A	R	A	F	F
V	E	G	E	T	A	T	E	
S	P	N			S	L	A	P
A	T	G	A	S	E	I		
R	E	V	I	V	E	H	E	A
M	L	N	I	R	C			
S	T	R	E	E	T	P	E	N

Crossword Solution
from page 12

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